

Health and Wellbeing Strategy Action Plan: C3 Reduce Social Isolation and Loneliness

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Why this is a priority

The scale of the problem

- **Loneliness has doubled:** 40 percent of adults in two recent surveys said they were lonely, up from 20 percent in the 1980s.

The Impact of Loneliness / Social Isolation

- In the US, a follow-up of 800 older adults over four years found that lonely people were **more than twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease** than those who were not lonely
- One study concludes lonely people have a **64% increased chance of developing clinical dementia** (Holwerda et al, 2012)
- Loneliness and social isolation are harmful to our health: research shows that lacking social connections is as **damaging to our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day** (Holt-Lunstad, 2015).

Effective ways to tackle loneliness

- A White Paper released by The Second Half Foundation in July 2013 suggests that reducing social isolation amongst older people through the **creation of local hubs can produce returns of over 135% a year to the NHS and local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).**

Where are we now

- Acknowledge continued challenge to identify people who feel lonely. A **survey of 2,256 people about their experiences of loneliness**, alongside interviews with mental health professionals and providers found that:
 - 42% of people felt depressed because they felt alone
 - Of all of the people involved in the survey, **30% felt too embarrassed to admit to being lonely**
- Continue to **consider how we can improve our evidence base** to better understand the challenge:
 - Sure Start for older people
 - Community Engagement
 - JSNA for Purfleet integrated healthy living centre showed that the South Ockendon Locality has several of the wards with the highest proportions of older people that live alone (in Aveley and Uplands, 38.8% of pensioners live alone and 38.0% of those who live in Ockendon, compared to the Thurrock average of 31.9%).
- Available evidence therefore indicates that there is a **significant problem in Thurrock**, particularly amongst older people
- Important to recognise that more **traditional approaches to addressing social isolation and loneliness can have a limited impact** on an individual's quality of life

Adopting a new approach – Our Action Plan

- Multi Faceted, coordinated and fresh approach to tackle loneliness and social isolation
 - **Local Area Coordinators** are designed to connect lonely and vulnerable individuals with the social capital and community assets within their community.
 - Piloting of **Social Prescribing**, enabling GPs to prescribe social interventions in addition to medical treatment
 - Increasing **Timebanking by 10%** helping to stimulate volunteering and reducing social isolation experienced by service users
 - Introducing **screening for depression** for people aged 65+ enabling people to be referred to the most appropriate service at the earliest opportunity
 - Through Thurrock's CCG **supporting a peer to peer mentoring project** for people experiencing mental health challenges, creating networking opportunities and contributing to reducing isolation and loneliness
 - Establishing **Community Hubs across Thurrock**, providing a range of services for members of the community, including day activities and clubs

Impressive progress but more to be done

- Living Well in Thurrock
- Living Well @ Home



Thank You